

## **Doris Keene (1999 interview)**

My name is Doris Keene. I was born in this house on Quality Hill in 1904 at my family homestead. I've never lived anywhere else. My parents names were Charles and Suzie Jean (Wilder) Keene. My grandparents were Reuben and Orpha Keen. My father stated that he didn't know why they added the "e" to their name later. On my mother's side, my grandparents names were William and Florilla Wilder. I had two sisters and a brother. One sister (17 years older than me) was Flora (married named Zapf), and Hattie (16 years older than me) (married Henry Homan). My brother's name was Earl Keene. I never knew any aunts or uncles, except by name. They were gone when I was growing up.

I went to school next door here in the one room school until the eighth grade. There were probably about twenty students there. There was just one teacher at a time. I can remember a Miss Gifford, also a Miss Hanrahan and Mary Feidt (Her husband had a trucking business). She was the last one I had over here. There also was a Miss Shearling (sp?). She was one of the early ones. And there was Annabel Brill (married Kelsey). There was a coal stove for heat in the school. One of my playmates was Ethel White (married Pender). The school closed in 1939 and consolidated with Canastota. After eighth grade, I attended the Chapel Street School in Canastota but left when I was about sixteen, not quite graduating.

When I was very little, there was a blacksmith shop across from here, and later it was made into a grocery store (where Donald Post lives now). Also for many, many years there was Wanamakers Antique Shop next door. There was a church up on the green (in back of the green). The denomination was Presbyterian. There were just a few members. It was quite a good-sized church with a steeple and a bell. I don't know what became of the bell. The church was torn down later. We had Sunday School there. Alice Richardson was the Sunday school teacher. There were other houses in back of the green. The Smith place was there, but it burned and was built up again. The other two houses are just the same today. There is a large barn across the road from here that went with this farm. My father was a farmer and he had all the usual farm animals, including work horses with this 73-acre farm.

As far as neighbors, Herbert Yorton used to live up there in the house now occupied by the ARC residents. My sister, Hattie, used to live over on the corner. They lived at Greenway at one time. Her husband was not a farmer. The blacksmith's name was Nathan Baker, and he was grandfather to Baker Post and Donald Post.

As for other farms, Tom Clark lived over on Bruce Road and later there was a Turner farm (now Walrath's). The farmer's took their milk down where the Hermitage was, where Chapman's lived and had a creamery. I think they made cottage cheese there. When that disappeared they had to take it downtown to Middle States (where Queensboro Products is now).

I worked since I was sixteen years old. I worked at the Diemolding for twelve years. Then my job at home here was taking care of older ladies, and I did that for twenty-two years. It was a nice career, and I enjoyed it very much. We were just like one family, all together, four sometimes. Sometimes, some would come and stay just a week or two while their parents were away. My favorite years were those when I took care of the ladies at my home from 1951 to 1971, I think.

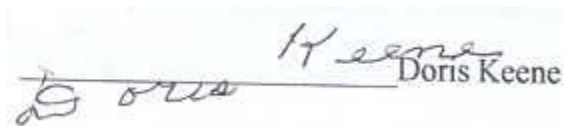
I get discouraged at times with the loss of my sight about ten years ago, but I am not angry about it. I know there are lots of others the same way, and some are worse than me. I am lucky to be in my own home. Health aides visit me here, and I belong to the Snack Program.

My parents had the most effect in my life. I looked after them here in this house until they died. Mother was seventy in 1937, when she died, and Dad was eighty in 1943 when he died, six years later.

My loved ones are all buried in Lenox Rural Cemetary.

If I were to leave a note here on my kitchen table for future generations to read, I would offer this advice:

**Obey your parents, and leave guns alone!**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Doris Keene". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature, the name "Doris Keene" is printed in a simple, sans-serif font.

recorded May 7, 1999 by Dorothy Pringle/Schneider